

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims as follows.

1. (original) A porous sintered compact of titanium oxide for production of metallic titanium through direct electrolytic process, in which it has a porosity of 20 to 65% and a hardness of 60 (HV) or higher.

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2. (original) A porous sintered compact of titanium oxide for production of metallic titanium through direct electrolytic process, in which it has a porosity of 20 to 65%, a specific surface area of 0.1 to 5.0 m<sup>2</sup>/cm<sup>3</sup>, and a volume ratio of pores with 0.3 to 100μm diameter to be 10% or higher to the total pore volume.

3. (original) A porous sintered compact of titanium oxide for production of metallic titanium through direct electrolytic process, in which it has a porosity of 20 to 65%, a hardness of 60 (HV) or higher, a specific surface area of 0.1 to 5.0 m<sup>2</sup>/cm<sup>3</sup>, and a volume ratio of pores with 0.3 to 100μm diameter to be 10% or higher to the total pore volume.

4. (currently amended) A process for producing a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, comprising using a titanium oxide powder having a grain size of 0.2 to 2000μm, molding it into a required shape with pressurization in a range of 9.8 to 78.5 MPa, and sintering it at 1100 to 1500°C for 0.5 to 10 hours.

5. ~~(currently amended)~~ A process for producing a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, comprising adding and

mixing 0.1 to 40%, based on mass, of a titanium suboxide powder to a titanium oxide powder followed by molding into a required shape, and sintering the resulting compact at 900 to 1400°C for 0.5 to 10 hours.

6. (currently amended) A process for producing a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, comprising using a titanium oxide powder having a grain size of 0.2 to 2000 $\mu$ m, adding and mixing 0.1 to 40 %, based on mass, of a titanium suboxide powder thereto, molding into a required shape with pressurization in a range of 9.8 to 78.5 MPa, and sintering at 900 to 1400°C for 0.5 to 10 hours.

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7. (currently amended) A process for producing metallic titanium, comprising using a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, arranging it adjacently to a conductor or dosely adhered around the conductor to constitute a cathode, dipping it in a molten salt electrolyte of 800 to 1050°C containing 40 mass % or more of calcium chloride, and reducing it by electric energization.

8. (new) A process for producing a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 2, comprising using a titanium oxide powder having a grain size of 0.2 to 2000 $\mu$ m, molding it into a required shape with pressurization in a range of 9.8 to 78.5 MPa, and sintering it at 1100 to 1500°C for 0.5 to 10 hours.

9. (new) A process for producing a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 3, comprising using a titanium oxide powder having a grain size of

0.2 to 2000 $\mu$ m, molding it into a required shape with pressurization in a range of 9.8 to 78.5 MPa, and sintering it at 1100 to 1500°C for 0.5 to 10 hours.

10. (new) A process for producing a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 2, comprising adding and mixing 0.1 to 40%, based on mass, of a titanium suboxide powder to a titanium oxide powder followed by molding into a required shape, and sintering the resulting compact at 900 to 1400°C for 0.5 to 10 hours.

11. (new) A process for producing a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 3, comprising adding and mixing 0.1 to 40%, based on mass, of a titanium suboxide powder to a titanium oxide powder followed by molding into a required shape, and sintering the resulting compact at 900 to 1400°C for 0.5 to 10 hours.

12. (new) A process for producing a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 2, comprising using a titanium oxide powder having a grain size of 0.2 to 2000 $\mu$ m, adding and mixing 0.1 to 40 %, based on mass, of a titanium suboxide powder thereto, molding into a required shape with pressurization in a range of 9.8 to 78.5 MPa, and sintering at 900 to 1400°C for 0.5 to 10 hours.

13. (new) A process for producing a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 3, comprising using a titanium oxide powder having a grain size of 0.2 to 2000 $\mu$ m, adding and mixing 0.1 to 40 %, based on mass, of a titanium suboxide powder thereto, molding into a required shape with pressurization in a range of 9.8 to 78.5 MPa, and sintering at 900 to 1400°C for 0.5 to 10 hours.

14. (new) A process for producing metallic titanium, comprising using a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 2, arranging it adjacently to a conductor or closely adhered around the conductor to constitute a cathode, dipping it in a molten salt electrolyte of 800 to 1050°C containing 40 mass % or more of calcium chloride, and reducing it by electric energization.

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15. (new) A process for producing metallic titanium, comprising using a porous sintered compact of titanium oxide according to claim 3, arranging it adjacently to a conductor or closely adhered around the conductor to constitute a cathode, dipping it in a molten salt electrolyte of 800 to 1050°C containing 40 mass % or more of calcium chloride, and reducing it by electric energization.